

# ADDRESSES TO CHILDREN

ON THE

## BEATITUDES.



MATTHEW V. 1—12.

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BY MRS. CAMERON,

Author of "*Margaret Whyte*," "*Two Mothers*," &c

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FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.



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# ADDRESSES TO CHILDREN

## ON THE

# BEATITUDES.



### ADDRESS I.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”—  
*Matt. v. 3*

My beloved children, I earnestly ask you to attend to these words : they were spoken to you by the Lord of Life himself ; and with them he begins that discourse which is well known to many of you by the name of the Sermon on the Mount. Some of you have probably learned the whole Sermon by heart, or at least the twelve first verses, containing what are called the Beatitudes. I have known many little ones lisp these words when they were learning their first infant language ; and if you have not already done so, let me advise you to learn these verses by heart immediately : for it will be a great help to you in understanding their meaning, to have them always fresh in your mind.

In addressing you, I shall take it for granted that you know the name of your Creator, your Saviour, and your Sanctifier ; that you have learned the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer ; and that you know that you have three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, who are always striving to hinder your progress towards heaven. Most children have learned

these things at home from their parents, or at school from their teachers, or on a Sunday from their spiritual pastors; but those who watch for your souls are very anxious that you should know more and more of the true meaning and spirit of religion, and that, like Samuel and our Blessed Saviour, you should increase in wisdom and knowledge as you daily increase in stature. You must not suppose that the study of religion is too serious for your years: this thought comes from Satan, and is one of his great deceits. He was a liar from the beginning, and is still a liar. He often says to you, "It will be time enough to think of religion when you are old; play and amusement only are suited to your age; you may perhaps live many years; when sickness and death draw near, you can then prepare for eternity."

The world and the flesh give you also the same lesson. But you must pay no regard to what they say. You must stop your ears to their false suggestions; for they would lead you into utter destruction.

But what does the Word of God teach you? A lesson which I hope you will mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Our Saviour says, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.* (Mark x. 14.) And on many accounts none are so well fitted to come to him as children and young people. Harken to me diligently while I explain to you how this is. You are fresh out of your Creator's hands, and it is common for people to be most thankful for blessings they have just received.

Life and health and rosy childhood, cheerfulness and gaiety, have just been bestowed upon you. A thousand new delights are daily opening upon you. The sunshine, the green fields, the violet-bank, the butterfly

with silken wings, all these please you, and are all the gifts of God. These and a thousand other pleasures have only lately opened upon you, as you gradually sprung from your nurses' arms into the freedom and activity of childhood. Every thing you want also for the support of your bodies is abundantly provided for you—

“ All without your care and payment,  
All your wants are well supplied.”

Who then should praise God, if not those who are so highly blessed?

My young ones, will you, who are the latest works of God—who are rejoicing daily in the abundance of his gifts—will you be the last to bless the Giver. Suppose I were to offer to any child among you, a basket of very choice fruit, and that child were to take the fruit, and in taking it say, “ I will accept your fruit and enjoy it, but I will not thank you for giving it:” would you not all cry shame upon such a child for his ingratitude? But you are doing the very same thing, if you accept the blessings of childhood, and refuse to thank your God. A pious child is lovely in the eyes of angels and men; but an unthankful, worldly-minded child is disgusting and unnatural. If you have been hitherto unthankful, humble yourselves before God for your great sin.

I hope, my dear young ones, I have made it appear that it is particularly fitting that you should love and delight in your God. And I hope, then, that I shall not have much trouble in persuading you to try to understand those remarkable and beautiful verses with which our Saviour began his discourse, and which, by little and little, I mean to explain to you.



*And seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. v. 1—3.)*

Before I begin my promised explanation, we will unite in praying that you may be of the number of his disciples who will come to him, to hear the words of eternal life explained to you. Remember, that if you sit at his feet as hearers in this life, the day will come when you shall sit on his throne to reign with him for ever.

In what I am now going to say, I shall first try to explain to you, who are meant by the poor in spirit; secondly, what is meant by the kingdom of heaven; I shall then show you why our Saviour begins his discourse with this beatitude; and, in the last place, I shall beg my beloved children to ask themselves some questions which will be suitable to the subject we shall have been considering.

First. It is necessary that babes should be fed with milk; and therefore a very plain and simple explanation of this subject must be given you now. Hereafter, if you grow in grace and wisdom while you are young, you will be able to understand the commentaries of the wise and learned.

By the poor in spirit are meant those men and women, and those children, who think meanly of themselves. I might perhaps better say, they are those persons who think truly of themselves. A child who is poor in spirit, knows and feels that his heart is naturally wicked. He knows that he was born in sin, because, when our father Adam ate the forbidden fruit



sin entered into the world, and the nature of man became corrupt; and every child of Adam is born with the seeds of sin in his heart, and he feels that these seeds of sin are daily springing up; and he knows, too, that as he was born in sin, so likewise he was born a child of wrath, exposed to the just anger of a righteous and holy God, and in danger of everlasting fire in Hell.

The child who is poor in spirit knows that though he was baptized when he was a little infant, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, yet he knows that he has not since walked worthy of his heavenly calling.

At his baptism he was devoted to God: he was laid as it were in his Saviour's arms, and great blessings, the forgiveness of sins, and a new and holy nature, God's favour and blessing in this life, and eternal glory in the next, were asked for him, and promised to him, at his baptism: he was called to be "a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Yet he has not been mindful of these things. He knows that, ever since he can remember, his heart has been foolish at best, and very often full of sin: like a foolish lamb, he has wandered from the pasture of the Good Shepherd; where at his baptism he was gently brought to feed, to go in and out, and find sweet grass. He knows that he has fed upon the coarse weeds of this world, and followed after other flowers and fruit than the flowers of Paradise and the fruit of the tree of life. The child who is poor in spirit can say from his heart, "I have done those things which I ought not to have done, and I have left undone those things which I ought to have done, and there is no health in me." Therefore the child who is poor in

spirit, feeling all these things, knows that he can never be saved by his own goodness, but only through the mercy of God. He must be saved by the mercy of God the Father, *who so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*; (John iii. 16.) he must be saved by the mercy of God the Son, who so loved the world as to lay down his life for it; and through the mercy of God the Holy Ghost, who washes and purifies the heart of man from sin, and plants in it a new and holy nature.

Secondly. We will consider what is meant by the kingdom of heaven, which belongs to the poor in spirit. The kingdom of heaven, in its full meaning, is that state of glory into which the righteous shall enter at the day of judgment. And if I were to try to explain to you what that is, I must have an angel's pen: *for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*; (1 Cor. ii. 9.) yet, by the glass of faith, we may sometimes discern a little of the Celestial City. In this glass, my children, I would advise you often to look. It is by looking often through this glass, that we become willing to take up our cross and follow Christ; and that we learn to be content with such things as we have: for if our hearts are set on that which is to come, we shall not care very greatly for those things which are here. But the kingdom of heaven not only means complete glory hereafter; it means also, a very sweet and happy state of mind here. The kingdom of heaven is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is that peace which we pray for every Sunday, which the world cannot give, nor take away.

The child who is poor in spirit shall, without doubt, taste this peace; because it is the peculiar gift of our Saviour to his people. He says, *My peace I give unto you: in me ye shall have peace.*

The child who is poor in spirit does not say or think to himself, "I am a good child, better than many of my acquaintance:" but he feels that he has sinned in thought, word, and deed, ever since he was born; and he knows that in himself there is nothing good, and that he must be cast into eternal fire, unless he is saved from it by the Saviour who died for him; and he casts himself before him, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" and our Saviour hears him, and pardons him, and makes him holy; and in his own time he sends his peace into his bosom to refresh him, and his peace is sweeter to his soul than the fragrance of flowers in the dew of evening to the feelings of his body.

In the third place, we will consider some of the reasons why our Saviour begins his discourse with this beatitude. If we would build a very stately palace, we must lay the foundation very low. We are continually told in the Bible, that God resists the proud, that he sends them empty away, and that he filleth the poor and humble with good things. There are more texts on this subject than I can here put down, and it would be a very good exercise for you to look for them in your Bibles, and to write them in a book, or learn them by heart. If you would ever get to Heaven, if you would ever make any advance in religion, labour after humility. It is the foundation-stone of true religion, and it is the top-stone of the work. Seek after it, pray after it, strive after it. As long as you think yourselves to be something, you shall be nothing, worse than nothing.

Our Saviour knew what was in the heart of man, and he knew that pride would always be the great hindrance to our receiving his words, and he therefore begins his discourse with pronouncing those blessed who are poor in spirit. Follow also the example as well as the precepts of Christ. He, who is the Lord of all, and reigns above the sky, began his life of glory and wonder in this world, in a manger, and closed it on a cross. Surely he sat himself down in the lowest place, and by his actions, as well as his words, he says to you his children, "Be ye poor in spirit, as I was poor in spirit. *Learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart.*" (Matt. xi. 29.)

In the last place, I would earnestly beg of you to examine yourselves whether you are poor in spirit; whether you are of the number of those children of whom is the kingdom of heaven; or whether you still belong to the multitude of those children of whom it is said that foolishness is bound up in their hearts. Are you sensible of your sin and misery by nature? Do you know that you have done many things to make God angry with you? that you have broken his commandments in thought, word, and deed? Ask yourselves such questions as these. Have you felt love to God for all his goodness to you? With what thoughts have you lain down in bed at night and got up in a morning? Have they not most commonly been thoughts of folly? How have you kept the Sabbath-day? Have not your thoughts been vain and wandering in God's house? and have not your prayers at home been said in a careless and trifling manner? Have you not often disobeyed your parents? quarrelled with your brothers and sisters, and other companions? Have you not neglected

your lessons, and the employments belonging to that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call you? And has it not, on most occasions, been your chief object to please yourself rather than to do the will of God? Are you, my children, sensible in any degree of these sins, and the many others of which you have been guilty? and are you sorry that your hearts are so wicked? and that they are so continually leading you far away from God? If you are in any degree thus poor in spirit, pray that you may become still more so; that you may make every day some advance in this holy and happy state of mind; that so an entrance may be ministered unto you abundantly into the kingdom of heaven. But if you do not feel humbled, by looking into your lives and hearts; and, if instead of encouraging lowly thoughts of your own state, you think yourselves very good, and pride yourselves upon not committing the same faults into which some other children fall; or if you please yourselves with thinking that you are more clever or handsome than other children of your acquaintance; in short, if you love to indulge high thoughts of yourselves in any way, instead of trying to find out your faults, and repenting of them; then I must tell you, that you are not poor in spirit, but that you are children of this world, and we all know what *their* portion will be. But there is still hope for you; the Lord waiteth to be gracious to you. Arise, make haste and turn to God while the day of grace yet lasteth; pray to be made poor in spirit, and your prayer shall be heard. My children, it is but a little while since you lay as helpless infants in your nurses' arms. Surely it will be no hard lesson then to teach you to cast yourselves on your heavenly Father's mer-



cy. Your souls are helpless as to the things of heaven, as your bodies were when infants with respect to the things of earth. Your parents and your nurses carried you then in their arms, and tenderly supported you; they screened you from harm with anxious care, and daily provided for your wants: but your heavenly Father loves you better than they did; his arms of love are open to receive you; he is full of tender compassion towards you; make haste, and delay not to come to him. For then, and then only, shall you become poor in spirit; and then, and then only, the kingdom of heaven will come into your hearts here, and become your inheritance also for ever and ever.



## ADDRESS II.

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”—*Matt. v. 4.*

I TRIED lately, my beloved children, to explain to you who are the poor in spirit; and I told you, that children who are poor in spirit, are those who have a humble and lively sense of their sinful and helpless state by nature.

Our Saviour, in the verse I have just read to you, proceeds to say, that *they* are blessed who mourn. I shall therefore, treading in his steps, try to explain to you how children who are poor in spirit, not only know their sins, but mourn for them; and then I shall show you how those children who mourn for their sins are blessed.



First, I shall try to show you how children who are poor in spirit mourn.

Those people who have never walked themselves in the strait, though pleasant, path which leads to eternal life, will often tell you that it is a very dull thing to be religious: but it is a great mistake. Children without religion, and who think of nothing but pleasing themselves with their horses, and their whips, and their coaches, and dolls, and fine clothes, and ornaments, or any other earthly thing, may often in company make a great deal of noise, and appear very happy. But follow them home, and see them in their private bed-chamber, or in the company of their own brothers and sisters, and you will often find them sulky and silent, or fierce and quarrelsome, dissatisfied with the pleasures they have, unthankful, fretful, wearied with themselves and every body about them, disobedient to their parents, and murmuring at every task and business which they are set to do: while the holy child, though perhaps less noisy and more sober and moderate at his play, will take home with him a gentle, affectionate, and calm temper; wherever he is, you will find in him the same happy disposition; and every bee that buzzes in the sunshine before his window, the morning song of the lark, and the bleating of the lamb on the thymy hill, every flower that grows on the green bank, is pleasant to him; he is always humble, grateful, and thankful; and he enjoys a thousand pleasures which the worldly child cannot taste, because his heart is filled with pride and selfishness. Do not then believe the wicked world. Do not believe any body that tells you it is dull to be religious: for though religion may tell you to mourn, it is in order that you may be comfort-

ed. But perhaps you do not know what is meant by that mourning which *God* requires of you. Mourning generally means a mild kind of sorrow, like the complaining of doves: there is nothing violent in it. If you are poor in spirit, my children, you know that you are sinners; "you have done those things which you ought not to have done, and you have left undone those things which you ought to have done, and there is no health in you." Now, it is not enough that you should know this: you ought to feel some degree of sorrow for your sins; not because your sorrow can make any atonement for your sins; the blood of Jesus Christ can alone wash them away, but it is fitting, when children offend a very dear and kind Father, that they should feel sorry and ashamed on account of it, and if we are not sorry for our sins, it is likely that we shall soon fall into them again.

This godly sorrow or mourning is not natural to us; the natural effect of sin is only to make us feel a dread of God; but godly sorrow teaches us to love him; therefore, as it is not natural to us, we must take pains to feel it. I will give you a few easy rules to help you in gaining this sorrow. The first of these directions is, that you should pray to God to give you a tender conscience, which may quickly let you know when you fall into sin; and this you should pray for every day. And next I advise you, once a day at least, to get by yourself for a few minutes: if you have no other time, you can certainly shut your eyes on the world as soon as you lie down in bed, instead of entering into vain and foolish discourse with your bedfellow; and before you close your eyes in sleep, call to mind all the naughty things you have done that day, whether in thought,

word, or deed ; begging God first to show you, by the light of his Spirit, all the sin that is in your heart, and then humbly beseeching him to wash you from it in the blood of his Son. There is, besides, one day in the even on which you go to the house of God, and on that day, and in that house, you join with the people of God in calling yourself a miserable sinner. Before that day comes, or at least before the hour of service arrives, I would advise you to get by yourself, and examine yourself a little more particularly, that you may join in the confession of your sins with a true heart. And still further, I would beg of you *whenever* you find out that you have sinned against God, whatever business you are about, or in whatever company you may be, that you lift up your heart to God, and tell him in your secret thoughts, that you have fallen into sin, and ask for his pardon and grace.

Thus, my beloved children, you will learn to know quickly when you are going wrong, and your consciences will become tender. You will learn to mourn with godly sorrow for your sins. You will be plants of the Lord's planting, watered daily by his Spirit, and the sunshine of God's countenance will shine upon you, and cheer and refresh you ; and mourning according to God's will, you will have much less worldly sorrow. For it is pride, and discontent, and selfishness, which cause our real misery, and from these you will gradually be delivered. O my children, let me entreat you to mourn in sincerity for your sins, and then shall you be comforted, abundantly comforted, as I shall now proceed, in the second place, to show you.

*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Holy children, who are humbled for their

sins, and truly mourn for them, will in many ways be comforted. They will naturally have much comfort that other children know not of. We will suppose a family, or a nursery, or a school-room of children, who are poor in spirit, and who mourn for their sins. How ready they will be to forgive each other ! because they know they have much to be forgiven themselves ; they will be cheerful and thankful at all times, because their hearts are right with God. When the rain falls fast, and they are deprived of some pleasant scheme abroad, when there are no new playthings within doors, and every thing seems very dull ; yet they will be comforted, because they are in good humour with each other, and many a sweet token of love will those children be receiving from their parents who are always fearing to offend them. Naughty children are often driven from their parents' company, while good children are permitted to enjoy it. Many a pleasant game of play will the gentle and humble enjoy ; while the wordly-minded are too discontented, and too proud, to agree together in what way they will spend their time. Besides, humble children are always glad to help each other ; while the proud and selfish often find pleasure in taking each others' playthings away, and in vexing and teasing one another in a thousand ways. These are but a small part of the comforts which humble children who fear sin enjoy ; and many others, I trust, you will find out by your own experience. But there is a higher and better way in which they will be comforted by God himself. *Great peace have they who love thy law*, is said in the Bible, and there are many, many verses in the Bible, which I would have you look for and learn by heart, which tell of the blessedness those children know

who are little in their own eyes, and tremble at God's word. To such as these will God look. Though we may have lived many years in the world, we cannot know all the comforts which God's children enjoy even in this life; but some of them I will tell you. When holy children are sick, they are not impatient, they do no fret, and God is very present with them, to comfort them. When they have any duty to do which they do not like, any difficult task or business appointed them, they set about it cheerfully, because they are humble, and they have learned to conquer their self-will: they look up to God for help, and wisdom, and direction, and they are supported and strengthened, and, when need be, comforted; while idle and wilful children lay up for themselves a multitude of sorrows. If they are laughed at for walking in the ways of God, and taking it patiently, without giving way to wicked shame, then He will be with them to comfort them. Even when they are mourning for their sins, and casting themselves at their Saviour's feet as sinners, he is more especially with them to comfort them.

But how shall I explain to you the different ways in which the God of love comforts his children? Can I tell you how the wind blows? whence it cometh, and whither it goeth? but I know it blows, because I am refreshed by sweet gales over banks of flowers, over mountains, over seas. So is the Spirit of God: we know not whence he cometh; but we know that he breathes upon us the airs of Paradise, because we are strengthened with heavenly strength, we are made able to do God's work, and are comforted with his peace. But it is not only in this world, that those who mourn shall be comforted; it is more especially in Heaven:



there God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; there we shall be comforted, even as one whom his mother comforteth. O happy children! who, having walked a while in God's ways here, are admitted to his presence for ever; *for in his presence there is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* (Psalm xvi. 11.)

Let me now ask you, my beloved children, whether *you* are of the number of those who mourn for sin. Perhaps you have never even thought what is meant by mourning for sin, or have not inquired whether you had any sin to mourn for. If you have mourned for any thing, it has been for a long lesson, or the loss of some pleasure, for the breaking of a favorite plaything, for a rainy day when you wanted to go out; for these things you have mourned, and perhaps with feelings of rebellion against the appointment of your masters or parents, or even of God: and perhaps you have shown this wicked feeling, by your selfish behaviour, and quarrelsome temper with your brothers and sisters, and even with other persons, where fear has not restrained you. Alas! I have very, very often seen this wicked mourning among children, even children who know better things. O that I had the tongue of angels to persuade you, that this is the sorrow of the world that worketh death! If you had never sinned before, this wordly sorrow needs true mourning. This is rebellion against God's will: it is the fruit of that corrupt nature which you brought into the world. Think not that it is the sin of a child, which will leave you when you grow up: if you do not strive against it, it will become stronger as you grow older. It will not leave you even when you die: but if not subdued before death,



It will be your tormentor afterwards, even through the endless ages of eternity. Now, my children, be persuaded! *now, now* to sorrow for sin, and for this sin especially of ungodly sorrow; for that unhumbled, proud, contentious spirit which makes you rise against any disappointment, or any crossing of your will. Be wise now, my children; lay hold on salvation while the day of grace lasts. *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* (2 Cor. vi. 2.) In a little while, if you shut your eyes to the things belonging to your peace, they will be hid from you for ever: even this warning will rise up in judgment against you.

But to you who have already begun to mourn for your sins, or desire to begin to mourn for them, I would say, press on: the way is narrow, and there are many dangers and enemies on either side of the road, and you must take care not to turn either to the right hand or the left: but the way itself is pleasant and safe. And if you go on in your way weeping, bearing precious seed, you shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing your sheaves with you.



### ADDRESS III.

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”—*Matt. v. 5.*

I HAVE often heard it said, that if a person could see himself in a passion—could see how ugly he looks, he would never fall into one again. It is indeed very true, that a person in a passion looks very ugly. When a

little child is stamping, and screaming, and kicking you would be tempted to run away from him, as from a wild beast, if you did not know that he was very weak, and was not able to do you any harm; and even an older child, who is ashamed of falling into a violent passion like a baby, and does not stamp and kick, has yet a very fierce and disagreeable appearance when he gives way to angry and impetuous feelings. But if a passionate child is disagreeable, a meek one is just as pleasant: there is a continual sunshine on his countenance, and he does not lose his gentleness and composure, however he is treated. He is like a river flowing calmly along; while the passionate child is like the sea, continually casting up mire and dirt.

Every body will say, "I should like to be meek and I had rather not be passionate; a meek person must always be happy, while a passionate person is continually in trouble." But saying and feeling this will not make you meek. It is a very difficult thing to be meek; and the foundation of this sweet temper must be laid low, even in true humility of heart. Those who are poor in spirit, and mourn for sin, can alone be truly meek.

I shall now try to show you, first, what meekness is and then explain to you how it is the fruit of humility only; and, afterwards, we shall be able to understand in some little degree, how the meek inherit the earth.

Meekness is that amiable and gentle temper which a true Christian displays in his conduct towards his fellow creatures. You have learned, perhaps, in your Child's Catechism, that Moses was the meekest man that ever lived: and when you read, in the Book of Exodus, and the following Books of Moses, the account

of his leading the People of Israel out of Egypt to the borders of the Land of Canaan, you will see in his conduct a pattern of true meekness which will be instructive to you. His temper was tried in many ways by the People of Israel, and most persons would have been so provoked by their conduct towards him, as to have fallen into violent passions with them; yet we never read of his giving way to passion except once, on which occasion God was much displeased with him; which shows to us, that the sin of undue anger was always, in the sight of God, a very great sin.

The pattern of meekness which the history of Moses places before us in the Old Testament, is well worth our imitating; but there is a still more excellent pattern, a more noble and glorious lesson of meekness, which our Saviour sets us in the New Testament. Let me beg of you to read the Gospels with great attention, for the purpose of observing and admiring the meekness which was constantly to be seen in our blessed Saviour's conduct. Throughout the whole time that he taught the people publicly, he was tried by the scoffs, the sneers, the rudeness of his enemies, and fatigued by the ignorance and stupidity of his friends; till that last great week arrived, in which his enemies had their complete triumph over him, and all his friends forsook him. But when, O when, in all this time, did his meekness forsake him? He was not, indeed, backward to reprove sin; but he always did it in such a spirit as showed that he was angry with people for sinning against God, and not because he had been teased or offended.

Now meekness, though much praised, is but little understood, and little practised. Indeed, I am sorry

to say, that pains are often taken to teach little children a spirit which is quite opposite to meekness. I have seen a little child encouraged by the smiles of grown-up people for shrugging up its shoulders, and saying, "No," in a very cross voice; for throwing away in disdain something which has been given to it; and for behaving in so rude and proud a way as would never have been endured, had not the child been young, and small, and pretty. Thus do people water and cherish the bud which, when it becomes a full-blown flower, they wish often to pluck off and cast away. Very few children reach four or five years of age, without having gained some habit of fretfulness or impatience; and perhaps no child is without a natural disposition to some bad temper. In a large family, in a nursery, or a school, how many bad tempers do you see prevailing! how much selfishness and unchristian vulgarity! Where do you see children civil and obliging to each other, bearing with each other, ready to give up their own will, kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another? Yet all this they would be if they were truly meek; and all this we ought to try to be, and in a measure shall be, if we endeavour to gain this heavenly temper of meekness in the right way, for it is the fruit of humility alone; none but the humble can be meek.

In order to be meek, we must feel disposed to be very patient, very forgiving; and who is so likely to be patient as that man, or that child, who feels that God is very patient, very forgiving with him. I will read you a story about this, which our Saviour himself tells.—*There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty: and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly*

forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, *Thou hast rightly judged.* And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, *Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.* And he said unto her, *Thy sins are forgiven.* And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, *Who is this that forgiveth sins also?* And he said to the woman, *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.* (Luke vii. 41—50.) Besides this, a humble child knows that he can do nothing good of himself; therefore, when he strives to be meek, he looks up to God for help. A proud person may appear to be meek now and then, but none but the really humble can be meek at all times.

I come now to explain to you how it is that the meek inherit the earth. And here I must only enter into a few of the ways in which they will do so: more will unfold themselves to you as you become better acquainted with the Bible. In a plain and natural way the meek inherit the earth—*Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.* (Prov. xv. 17.) Every creature of God is



designed to give us a certain degree of pleasure or profit, if we receive it rightly: and the reason why people in general do not enjoy the blessings put in their way, is, not because they have not enough of them, but because they do not receive them in a right spirit; they are not only unthankful for them, but are contentious and quarrelsome about them. For instance: I have seen a child, in full health, playing with many pleasant brothers and sisters, and yet out of spirits, sullen, silent, and over-looking a variety of pleasures before him, because he is disappointed of some trifling thing he wants, or because some favorite scheme or game of play is not managed exactly according to his taste; while, on the other hand, I have seen a child, whom his brothers and sisters have unkindly robbed of some of his little possessions, thankfully and cheerfully enjoy the rest.

How often do we see little children fretting in a nursery, because they all want the same thing at the same time! while brothers and sisters who dwell together in unity, and are ready to give up to one another, are always cheerful and good-humoured, and really enjoy every pleasure that comes in their way, and doubly enjoy it, because they have learned to be pleased with seeing their companions pleased. Besides all this, there is a peculiar blessing which God will give to the meek: and whether they have much or little of the good things of this world, this blessing shall rest upon what they have, as dew comes down upon flowers, and brings forth their sweetness. And when this life shall be ended, the meek shall indeed inherit abundance of life: in the land of promise he shall have a goodly heritage, even for ever and ever.



In the last place, let me earnestly entreat you, my beloved children, to examine yourselves whether you have this Christian grace of meekness. Some children may be ready to answer, "I am meek;" because they are of a quiet disposition, and would rather go without a thing than have any trouble in keeping or getting it. This temper does not always proceed from meekness: it may come from indolence, or the mere love of being quiet; there may be nothing in it really humble, patient, or self-denying. Let me ask you, are you never disturbed by any thing? Though few things disturb you, yet some, no doubt, do: try to recollect whether this is not the case; and ask yourselves whether you strive to get the better of this disturbed feeling, or whether you give way to it. You are not meek, because you are seldom tempted to be cross or impatient, but because you strive against ill-temper and impatience whenever you are disposed to feel them, and strive against them in a right way. Very few of you, I think, will make this excuse, that you are not easily provoked; at least if you examine your heart and behaviour diligently, you will find that you are in general very impatient of control. Boys, especially, often allow themselves in a noisy, imperious way of speaking, because they think it is manly. They do not remember that the truly brave are almost always gentle: it is false courage that is fierce and bullying. A boy who is gentle and affectionate to his sisters and little brothers, who is not easily provoked by their silly tricks or silly language, will be most likely to protect them from any real danger. Meekness shows self-command; and a boy who cannot command his temper on common occasions, will seldom be master of

himself in times of danger. Ask yourselves, my dear children, whether you do not give way to teasing, fretful temper. Often, when a little boy or girl seems disposed to be cross, its brothers and sisters take a pleasure in teasing it, and making it still more out of temper; while, by a little kind treatment, its fit of ill-temper might have been prevented. Some children, if they think they are not treated with proper respect by those younger than themselves, will find fault with them in the most violent tones of pride and passion. What flat contradiction, what positive assertions, what unkind and teasing language, what fierce, what querulous voices, do we often hear in the nurseries where the children of Christian parents are trained up! Sometimes, though but seldom I hope, I am ashamed almost to name such things, even pinching, beating, and boxing of ears have been heard of. But I would draw a veil over things so shocking.

O my beloved children! these things ought not to be. Will you, who are weekly, if not daily, instructed in the things of God—you, who were brought in your infant days to the font of baptism, on whose tender foreheads the cross was marked as a sign that you should be the servants of Christ—will you live together like the brute beasts that perish? What could Heathen children do worse? Oh! shame!

A Christian nursery should be a scene of brotherly love, of infant worship. Here we should see the elder brothers and sisters, by their own examples, and gentle instruction and readiness to bear with the little troublesome ways of their lisping companions, moulding the little creatures, fair and lovely in outward form, into habits of piety, and every thing pure, and gentle, and

lovely in inward character, repressing every angry  
one and look, exhorting and encouraging to love.  
Let the baby-arm, instead of striking its nurse or sis-  
ter, be taught to stroke; the lip to smile, instead of  
out; the struggling shoulder be gently put down;  
and, in its stead, the knee taught to bend in prayer;  
and the baby that now selfishly swallows its cake, be  
instructed to share it with its little companions.

O my children! you who are of an age to under-  
stand, I fear you have been partakers of this guilt, not  
only as infants yourselves, but by encouraging and pro-  
moting it in others, after you came of an age to know  
its evil. If you are seven or eight years of age, or  
even younger, you are able to do much to hinder all  
these sad works of darkness. Awake! awake! see  
your sin in living in evil tempers yourselves, and in  
encouraging them in these little fair ones. Cast your-  
selves at your Saviour's feet, humbled for your sins,  
and truly mourning for them. Seek to be washed from  
them in his blood, and pray for a new spirit, even the  
spirit of meekness; and henceforth labour to live a new  
life yourselves, and to encourage a new spirit, and  
establish new habits, even the habits of love, in the  
nursery or school-room where you dwell. And O  
that this reproach might be rolled away from among  
us! and that a Christian school-room and a Christian  
nursery might no longer be a cage of every unclean  
beast, but a habitation of holy, gentle, pious children,  
loving and beloved, no more the disgrace of the Chris-  
tian name, but its praise and ornament! so that it may  
be said of our children, as it was of old of the Christian  
world, "See how these infants love one another!"

## ADDRESS IV.

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"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."—*Matt. v. 6.*

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OUR Saviour, in order to teach us what our feelings ought to be about heavenly things, makes use of the plainest comparisons to common things, such as even a little child can understand. Every child knows what is meant by hunger and thirst, and therefore he is prepared to understand what those feelings of our souls are which our Saviour calls blessed.

I shall make some remarks upon these feelings and desires which our Saviour calls hunger and thirst after righteousness; I shall try to explain what that righteousness is which we are so greatly to desire; and then show how those persons who thus hunger and thirst shall be filled.

Were I to invite a party of little ones to my house, who had been many hours without food, and were I to spread a table for them covered with bread, and milk, and fruit, and other refreshing food, I am very sure that they would no sooner see or smell the repast, than they would be filled with strong desires for it. And if I were to say, "Before you partake of this meal, you must do such and such a thing; you must run a long race; you must gather such and such flowers; or you must learn such a task;" I am quite certain that their desires after the food would set the little hungry ones nimbly and cheerfully to work; and while they worked, many a longing look would be cast on the table,

and many a pleasant hope would be inspired by the sweet smell of strawberries and other delicate fruit. My children, as would be such a table to your perishing bodies, so should righteousness be to your souls.

Righteousness is the forgiveness of your sins ; it is complete restoration to the favour of your heavenly Father, through the merits of your dying Saviour ; it is holiness ; it is being cleansed from sin, from selfishness, from pride, from ill-temper ; it is joy ; it is peace ; —it is being made like God in holiness and happiness.

Children who know the evil of their own hearts, who mourn for their sins, who desire to live a life of obedience to God and of love to their fellow-creatures, will surely earnestly desire the forgiveness of their sins, and that they should be made pure and holy ; that they may enjoy the sunshine of God's favour, be filled with peace and joy in believing, and show forth the fruits of love in their lives.

Righteousness may here mean, also, those means of grace by which our souls are strengthened and refreshed—our heavenly manna, which we feed on in our way to Zion—the house of God—private and family prayer ; or the joining of one or two brothers or sisters in prayer together—the singing of psalms and hymns—and more than these, it may mean the Supper of the Lamb, the wedding feast, when the followers of Christ shall sit down with him in his heavenly kingdom ; where *they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.* (Rev. vii. 16.)

These, these are things which holy children should hunger and thirst after with secret and earnest desires.

The goods things of this world, those that are inno-



cent and lawful, we may in a degree desire, for God has given us all things richly to enjoy; but they must not have the first place in our hearts, for they are vain and perishing. *Riches make to themselves wings, and flee away.* (Prov. xxiii. 5.) The six days bring their pleasures, and we may enjoy them thankfully: but we should strive to love the seventh day best. Of Sunday we should be able to say, *A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.* (Psalms lxxxiv. 10.) The days of our life have many enjoyments, but they will soon be passed away. Our life is as a tale that is told; it is like the track of an arrow which parteth the air, but the way of it cannot be known. But heavenly things cannot pass away, they cannot become old. In Heaven we shall see God face to face. There we shall be made righteous even as he is righteous: we shall be purified from sin. Let us love to think of eternal glory, when time and death shall have passed away for ever.

As the hungry desire food, and as the thirsty desire drink, so let our souls hunger and thirst after pardon and holiness, after the means of grace here, and the presence of God for ever; and then, as surely as the words of Christ are truth itself, so surely we shall be filled.

The brutes that perish cannot desire heavenly things; they desire food, and their heavenly Father filleth them. Will he, think you, take less thought for us? are we not better than many sparrows? If he plants holy desires in our hearts by his Spirit, will he not satisfy them? Yes: if we are poor in spirit, and hunger after righteousness, he will feed us with the bread of life, though he may send the rich empty away. If we earnestly desire pardon of sin, he will assuredly wash us from



our sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. If we desire holiness, he will create a new spirit within us, the spirit of humility and love, and mould us gradually into his own heavenly image. If we earnestly desire to meet God in his own house, or in our closets at home, we shall, without doubt, find him; and if we long for his presence in glory, when we awake up, we shall be satisfied with his likeness. If we hunger and thirst after God, he will fill us with himself. We know but little yet of that joy which he can give his people: but we are sure that the more we desire to know him, the more will he make himself known to us.

In our natural state we live and die without any lively desires after righteousness. Happy then are we when we feel any of this holy hunger and thirst. Let us press forward, that our desires after righteousness may daily become stronger.

And now, my beloved children, let me ask you if you feel any thing of this hungering and thirsting after righteousness. You may know a good deal about religion, and perhaps not appear to your fellow-creatures to do any thing very wrong, because you are restrained by wise parents, and yet you may not feel any real desires in your heart after true religion. You may read your Bible, go to Church, and answer any question clearly and quickly that may be asked you out of the Bible, so as to give people a good opinion of your religion; and yet your affections may not be fixed upon heavenly things. Do you know what it is to get by yourselves, to mourn for sin, and pray earnestly for a new nature, that you may taste the peace of God here, and be made fit to die and dwell with him in Heaven? You may ask indeed for all these things in words; but when you ask

for them, do you desire them really, as you desire meat and drink when you are hungry and thirsty? Do not call yourself a child of God, unless you have something of this childlike desire to please him, and sorrow for offending him; unless you have some desire to wait upon him in his courts on earth, and dwell in his presence in Heaven.

How happy are those children who live with good parents on earth! But far more happy are those holy children who are always about their heavenly Father's business; who talk the language of Canaan even here, and are longing for the time when they shall reach the land of promise, and see their Father face to face—

“ Yes, e'en before we rise  
To that immortal state,  
The thoughts of such amazing bliss  
Should constant joys create.”

This is indeed a sweet life! O my children, should any of you turn your backs upon it? These privileges may be yours, young as you are; they have been the privileges of many. Some persons, who have lived to be old, and died full of years and holiness, have owned that they had walked with God from their cradle. Others have been cut off while very young, their days few, but ripe in grace—

“ A flower, when offer'd in the bud,  
Is no vain sacrifice.”

And O ye young ones, that turn your backs upon God! after what are you hungering and thirsting? after perishing toys? after pleasures that never fail to weary those who make idols of them? Whenever we hunger and thirst immoderately after worldly pleasures, we shall find them like the apples of Sodom, fair to look upon, but when tasted, full of ashes which we

cannot swallow. But give God your heart, hunger and thirst after heavenly things; and God will not only fill you with these, but he will himself take care that you are supplied with such a portion of earthly good things as are fit for you: for your heavenly Father knows the weakness of his little ones. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* (Matt. vi. 33.)

I would, in the last place, advise those children who know something of this hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and who desire to know more of it, and make advances in it, to form a habit of meditation upon heavenly things. As the situation and habits of children are different, it is difficult to form plans and rules that will suit every child, and every child must suit his plans in some degree to the habits of his family: but where it can be managed, I would recommend Sunday evening as a good time for heavenly meditation. As I recommended self-examination before the morning service, as disposing the heart to fervency of prayer and humility in God's worship, so, as a crown and conclusion of the work of the Sabbath, I recommend thinking over by yourself in an evening some sacred and heavenly subject: such as the love of God; the sufferings and death of Christ; the happiness of God's service; the joys of Heaven and eternal glory. Thus will hunger and thirst after righteousness be indeed kindled and cherished in your bosoms.

Encourage heavenly-mindedness in your companions. Join with your brothers and sisters, at convenient seasons, in serious conversation, or in prayer, and singing of hymns. Teach the younger ones, and try to fill their little hearts with holy desires. Be dili-

gent in secret prayer, and consider none of the means of grace as mere forms, but expect to meet your Saviour in them. Even when you are enjoying earthly pleasures, sometimes raise your mind beyond them in thoughts like these: "If God bestows such pleasures upon me, while yet a sinful child below, what must those glories be which he has prepared for me above!" Encourage feelings of thankfulness to God, for the little innocent pleasures you enjoy, as well as for the greater blessings of life. In short, by every means in your power, cherish feelings of childlike delight and confidence in God. Put your hand as it were within his, as you walk through the wilderness of this world, and ask him to be your companion and your guide; and without doubt he will be with you all your journey through, as he was with the Israelites of old. He will daily feed your souls with manna, and bring you at last to the heavenly Canaan, where you shall be fed with the grapes of the promised land; you shall sit down with your Saviour, and drink of the juice of the vine new in your Father's kingdom.



## ADDRESS V.

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"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."—*Matt. v. 7.*

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The child who knows the wickedness of his own heart; who feels that he deserves God's anger, and mourns for his sins; who is become meek and lowly of heart, hungering and thirsting after a new nature; is very pitiful and merciful to other people: he knows

that he wants mercy from God, and therefore wishes to show it to others. We ask God in our prayers, every day, to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and those who really feel that they want forgiveness, will be always ready to forgive others.

It is one part of mercy to forgive the sins of others; and it is another part to show them kindness and love. It is also a part of mercy to be kind and pitiful to brute creatures. But however mercy may show itself, it is still a fruit of true humility.

Many persons are called good-natured, and really are so sometimes, who are not truly merciful. I have seen many persons kind to animals, and good-natured, and civil in general, who have shown at other times great harshness and severity in judging of their neighbour's conduct, and a great want of tenderness and forgiveness when they have been offended in some point about which they are particularly jealous. Nothing but feeling in a very strong way that we are sinners, and deserving of God's anger, can make us truly merciful at all times.

I shall now try to show what is the behaviour of children who are truly merciful; next, I shall show how merciful children obtain mercy; and lastly, according to my usual order, shall beg you, my dear children, to examine yourselves whether you are merciful.

A merciful child, feeling his own sin, is ready to forgive others; and knowing how God has borne with him, he is patient with others. Few days will pass in which he will not meet with some cause of offence. Perhaps his brothers and sisters will be carelessly doing some little harm to his playthings, books, or some-



thing else that belongs to him, and often, from that ill-temper which is common, and so much indulged among children, they will be saying or doing something unkind to him: but he will be ready to make allowances for them: he will forgive the offence in his own heart, before the offender has asked forgiveness, or shown any disposition to do it.

If the person who has offended him should express any sorrow for his fault, the merciful child, like the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, will see him afar off, and run and fall on his neck, and kiss him. To seek forgiveness when he has himself offended, and to forgive when others have offended him, are two things which he will always be in great haste to do.

In the next place, the merciful child will be patient.

It often happens that an elder child has a little one for his companion who is very teasing and troublesome. A patient child, remembering how himself daily tries, not only the patience of his earthly parents, but that of his heavenly Father also, (if we may be allowed so to speak,) will bear with the little teasing ways of the child, and refrain himself when he is disposed to be provoked. If he is employed to teach any thing to another child, he will not grow angry because that child does not understand him so quickly as he could wish, or even although he shows an unwillingness to learn or a frowardness of temper: he knows his own weakness, and he remembers how provoking are his own ways.

A merciful child is very kind. The child who would be merciful should read and learn by heart the history of the good Samaritan. It is a sweet story, and we should prize it very highly, because it was told us by our Saviour himself.

If there is any accident in the family, if any body is ill, the merciful child is all quiet activity: he does not increase the trouble by asking questions and making noisy lamentations, but he thinks to himself, "How can I be of use?" not, "How can I behave so as to be noticed myself?" and therefore, if he finds the most useful thing he can do is to step gently about the house, to go on quietly with his business, and keep out of the way of others who are busy, he is ready to do it; or he is equally ready to do any little service, any errand, as nimbly, as accurately, and as quietly as he can. He is very kind to those who are weaker and younger than himself: he does not forget that he always stands in need of God's protection from a thousand dangers seen and unseen, that he must look up to the strong for strength; and therefore he delights to be the protector of his little brothers and sisters, and is glad to show any little act of kindness even to the baby in the cradle.

The merciful child remembers the poor.—*Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* (Psalm xli. 1.) Almost all children have something which it is in their power to give away; even the children of the poor spend many pence upon cakes, apples, and other things of the sort, which do them little or no good. Children, it is a sweet pleasure to give to the poor; try it, and you will find it to be so. If you lay out six-pence, or a penny, on cakes or fruit, the pleasure is quickly over: but if you deny your appetite, and buy a loaf, perhaps, for some poor creature who stands in need, you may make the widow's heart sing for joy, and your own too in the remembrance of it.

A merciful child is therefore self-denying, that he may give to others. He will also gladly fall in with

any plan of doing good that is pointed out to him: for instance, in helping to teach poor children at home, as far as his slight abilities will allow; or in forwarding any scheme of giving assistance to the ignorant and distressed a great way off.

Lastly, a merciful child is kind to animals.

It is common to see children, as well as men and women, expressing some extraordinary regard for a particular horse, or dog, or bird, and yet not kind to animals in general; and boys, particularly, will spend a great deal of time in a stable or dog-kennel, in very bad company, where they learn a great many things that they ought not to know, because they say they are fond of horses and dogs; and yet these very children will often take great pleasure in tormenting other dumb creatures. Cats, and birds, and donkeys, and many insects and reptiles, are cruelly teased by children. This is a subject not pleasant to talk of; but let all children seriously consider, that He who made these creatures hears their dying groans, or their silent and inward mourning, and keeps a strict account of all their sufferings; and at the last day he will avenge their cause upon you; their tormentors, if you do not make haste to get pardon for your sins, and to change your habits of cruelty for habits of mercy: for the unmerciful shall not obtain mercy.

I remember somewhere reading a story of a boy, who, on a very sultry morning, dragged a toad from a place of shade and laid it on its back in the hot sun, and passing the same way at night, found the toad shrivelled up and dead. Some time after, the boy was afflicted with a dreadful fever, in which he suffered from constant, parching heat, and the image of the toad was constantly before him. I do not remember the end of

the story, but I hope the boy was warned by his affliction to seek forgiveness of his sin, and was thus preserved from the more intolerable heat in which not one drop of water is afforded to cool the tongue.

The merciful child then is tender-hearted, forgiving, patient, long-suffering, and, as far as in him lies, kind and pitiful to all the creatures whom his heavenly Father has placed in his reach ; and thus enabled to show mercy himself, he shall without doubt obtain it.

Even in this world the merciful shall obtain mercy. In the common course of things, children who are very kind and good-natured, will always meet with kindness from others. How many instances of this you may all remember ! But that is not all ; there are many promises of good things even in this world to the merciful. It is said in the Bible, that if we remember the poor and needy, the Lord will make all our bed in our sickness. (Psalm xli. 3.) And again, *Cast thy bread upon the waters . for thou shalt find it after many days.* (Eccles. xi. 1.) David says, *I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* (Psalm xxxvii. 25.) And our Saviour himself says, *Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.* (Mark ix. 41.)

If then a child is tender-hearted, and kind, and forgiving to his fellow-creatures, because his heavenly Father has been very kind to him, and forgiven his sins for the sake of Jesus Christ ; that child shall obtain mercy even in this world, mercy in his turn from his fellow-creatures, and especially tender mercy from God. Every kind and merciful action which comes from a right feeling, and not from the desire of praise

or vain glory, is like a seed of good grain, which, if we put in the ground in spring, will certainly grow up, and in autumn bring a ripe and golden ear of yellow corn, which the reaper gathers, and which brings wholesome and pleasant bread for him who sowed it.

But, above all, in Heaven the merciful child shall obtain mercy. The face of eternal love, the light of God's countenance lifted up upon him, shall rest like eternal sunshine on his head.

Lastly, I would beg of you, my dear children, to examine yourselves whether you deserve to be called merciful.

Some children will say, "I am reckoned very good-natured; is not that being merciful?" Nothing, however, is so little understood as good-nature. You may be cheerful and good-humoured at times, and be ready to give something away: but do you not often take a pleasure in teasing and even hurting your companions, or in tormenting animals? Do you not give a great deal of pain and trouble to your parents, and masters, and mistresses, by your undutiful behaviour; and treat your servants with pride, or give them by your carelessness much needless trouble? Do you not ridicule and mock at other people, though you would not like the same to be done to yourselves? Are you not, in one word, selfish? and selfishness is quite opposite to mercy.

It is impossible to tell of the many ways in which children may be selfish; but if we give way to selfishness in any way, we cannot be really good-natured. Some of these ways I will mention.

Some children show selfishness by trying to get as much money as they can from their friends, in order to spend it on themselves. Others are anxious to have a share in all the pleasant schemes that take place in the



family, though their brothers and sisters may be on that account shut out from them. And some indulge envy when they see their companions enjoying any pleasures, or receiving any present they would like to have themselves. Others are desirous to help themselves to what is nice in food, without considering who goes without.

If you do not think you are selfish in this way, ask yourselves whether you ever try to be of use to other people. Are you ready at any time to deny yourselves a little pleasure, to give up a game of play, to refrain from buying a toy, or to give yourselves trouble in any way, when by this you may do good to those who need it, or make yourselves useful to your friends? Ask yourselves the honest truth, my children, and tell me whether you do not encourage selfishness in your hearts rather than humble thoughts of yourselves, thankful feelings towards God, and merciful affections towards your fellow-creatures.

How then can you call yourselves merciful? But O! if you are not merciful, how can you obtain mercy? and if you do not obtain mercy from God, what is to become of you?—If your heavenly Father has not mercy upon you! if Christ has not mercy upon you! if the Holy Spirit has not mercy upon you! consider, my children, solemnly consider, what is to become of you in this world, what is to become of you in eternity!

But it is a sweet, a happy life, a life which holy children have always led, to be showing mercy to their fellow-creatures, and to be always thankfully receiving it from God.

Pray to God to show you how he has first loved you and shown you mercy, by your “creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all by his

inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;" and pray him to forgive you for your ingratitude, and still to show you further mercy. And try to show your sense of his love, by a life of love and mercy to your fellow-creatures, and by kindness and pity to the animals which are the creatures of God as well as yourselves; and then shall the reproach be rolled away from you, who, being the children of Christians, and called Christians yourselves, yet too often act like the children of Satan. And then you shall know for yourselves, in part in this world, and more fully in Heaven, what it is to obtain mercy from the God of love; and you shall enjoy *that* mercy for ever and ever, while cruel and selfish children shall be denied the mercy they would not show.



## ADDRESS VI.

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"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—*Matt. v. 8.*

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THOSE persons who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are humbled for sin and mourn for it, who are merciful, meek, and lowly in heart,—have a hope of glory, (it may not as yet be a very strong hope,) which maketh not ashamed, and which will grow brighter and brighter till it come to the perfect day; it is hope which excites all who possess it to purify themselves even as Christ is pure.

Thus we see, my beloved children, that purity of heart is the crown of true humility. Those who are proud, and are satisfied with themselves, and do not hunger and thirst after a better righteousness than their own, cannot be pure; for how can a corrupt tree bring

forth good fruit? But if we are truly humble for our sin, and come in faith and godly sorrow to the foot of the cross, a new and holy nature gradually springs up and flourishes within us, and we are enabled to bring forth the pleasant fruits of peace, righteousness, and purity.

I shall first explain to you, my children, what is meant by being pure in heart; and then try to show you how the pure in heart shall see God, at least, as far as such a promise, so glorious and wonderful, can be understood by the children of men.

I shall consider purity, first, as simplicity and singleness of conduct. By this I mean a steady, regular desire to please God, and do our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us; and that, whether we gain or lose by the good things of this life, and whether the world approves of us or not.

My children, if you look narrowly at yourselves, how little of this will you find in your hearts! You will find, that in general you have no other motives for what you do but to escape punishment, and to please yourselves. From the fear of punishment, or perhaps the force of custom, children often behave outwardly well while they live with good persons; and it often happens that children who have borne a pretty good character when living at home with pious parents, become very naughty when they go to a large school where they are left much to themselves. Bad examples are set them, and they are perhaps laughed at for reading their Bible and saying their prayers, which they have been used to do at home; and so they leave off these things, because the fear of ridicule has as much power with them to make them naughty in one place, as the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward,

had to make them good in another. Had they acted at home from a sincere desire to please God, they would still have done so at school ; and then they could not so easily have left off praying, or reading, or any other good habit. Mere worldly motives for doing right are changed by outward circumstances, and our behaviour will of course alter with them. I do not mean to say, that children should not fear to be punished, or love to be rewarded, by their parents and governors ; but the fear of a punishment, or the hope of a reward, should not be first in their hearts.

A good child will have more pleasure in the feeling that his parents are smiling upon him and loving him, than in receiving a present from them ; and a frown from a kind parent will be more to him even than his rod : and, in like manner, to do what is right in the sight of God will be the first desire of a good child ; and to enjoy God's favour in this life, and to obtain his glory in the next life, will be his first motives for refraining from sin, at any time, or in any place.

A child also who is simple in his conduct will never use any crooked, indirect ways of getting any thing he wants, or of escaping blame or punishment.

All kinds of falsity, lying, and concealment of what ought to be told, are directly contrary to simplicity and singleness of conduct.

We may next consider purity as the keeping of the seventh commandment, in its fullest meaning.

Purity in this sense is to the soul what cleanliness is to the body. There is an old proverb, that cleanliness is next to godliness ; and perhaps godliness in this proverb may mean something very like purity.

Many children, especially little girls, take a great pleasure in new clothes ; and though they should guard

against vanity, which is a particular temptation to girls, yet it is well they should love to be neat and clean. But to prevent this desire of neatness from doing them harm, I would recommend to all little children, when they are dressed with more than usual care and nicety, to ask themselves, "Is my heart, my immortal part, neatly and carefully dressed? is it pure and holy? are its sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb? is it clothed with the robe of righteousness? If not, my new frock, clean hands, and curling hair, make me only like the whited sepulchre, which is full of dead men's bones."

It is a very good habit thus to learn a lesson from the common things which happen to us, and the outward objects we daily see. Our Saviour has preached to us from birds and lilies; and many a pleasant sermon may the sun and the air, the grass of the field, and the stars in the sky, as well as the things we are daily called to do, preach to us also if we will listen to them. Children who are pure in heart will keep a watch over their eyes, they will not look at any object which is unbecoming, they will never read an unholy book, they will keep a watch over their hands, they will keep a watch over their ears, they will listen to no impure discourse, let it be from whom it will; they will sooner stop their ears, if it is possible, or run out of the room, than listen to the wicked language of unholy children; and if they are unavoidably forced to hear language of this sort, they will strive to forget it, and never needlessly repeat it. They will keep a watch over their thoughts, they will entertain no unholy remembrances, they will think of no wicked things; and though they may be surrounded with wicked companions, they will love to solace their minds in secret, with sweet and holy thoughts.



Temptations to some sins we must fight with, and conquer; but we must run away from temptations to impurity; we cannot sprinkle a white frock with mire, without defiling it; how can we partake with the impure in any way, without defiling ourselves? Fly then from the impure child, for his way is a downhill path that leads to Hell.

In the second place, I will try to show you what is meant by seeing God.

In its most complete and glorious sense, it means that seeing of God face to face which will be granted after the resurrection from the dead to his glorified children: for in this life no man can see God and live. And here, what can I say? When a new and immortal body is given to us, and we are purified from all sin; and, through the merits of our glorious Redeemer, we are permitted to enter the highest Heaven, and see those things which we cannot know here; when eternal glory shall have become ours for ever; when the God of all joy, and blessedness, and goodness, and love, shall vouchsafe to manifest himself to us in a manner which would now completely overpower us;—then, who can tell, who can imagine what will be the bliss which we shall then drink of, as of an ocean which has no shores. In this glorious sense, the seeing God cannot be conceived; we only know that it means the perfect enjoyment of eternal and celestial glory, in his immediate presence. But in a lower sense than this, the pure in heart may be said to see God.

There is a way in which the children of God may walk with him in this life, as a man walketh with his friend: even here, God has promised to make his abode with his people, *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will*

*come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John xiv. 23.)*

If we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the help of the Spirit try to do the will of God at all times, and keep ourselves from sin, the light of his countenance shall be lifted up upon us, to guide, and refresh, and comfort us. Even a little child, if he tries to love and serve God, will often be made to feel that God is near to him, as a very kind Friend. Young as he is, he may rejoice in heavenly comforts. Does not an earthly parent smile as often upon his little helpless babe, as upon his elder children? and did not our Saviour take the little children in his arms? Samuel waited upon God betimes, and the Lord saw fit to call him in a peculiar manner.

Purify yourselves from sin, my children, and walk closely with God in humble faith on your Redeemer, and the secret of the Lord shall be with you; that peace which passeth all understanding, which a worldly-minded child cannot understand, shall, in such a measure as is good for you, be given to you. Young as you are, you shall walk with God as Abraham did here; and in due time you shall be admitted to his presence, to see him face to face for ever.

In the third and last place, my beloved children, I earnestly entreat of you to examine yourselves whether you are pure in heart, or are striving to become so. Do you desire, in the first place, and above all things, to please God? or are you striving to serve God and Mammon; walking in crooked, uneven, double-minded ways; behaving outwardly well when with good people, that you may obtain praise and escape punishment; and conforming yourselves to the ways of naughty children, when with them? Are you one

person in one company, and another person in another? When you want any pleasure, do you make use only of honest ways to obtain it, leaving it in God's hands to give it you, if it is good for you? or do you use any sly way to get your purpose? Do you speak the plain truth when you have done any mischief, or are afraid of getting blame? or do you prevaricate and conceal part of the truth, though you may not quite tell an absolute lie? Do you practise deceit, in short, in any way, either to escape pain or gain pleasure.

Lastly. Do you avoid, as you would poison, every unclean, impure, and indecent thought, word, and action? Do you run away from such books and such company as would teach you these things? and, instead of this, do you cultivate pure and holy thoughts? Do you avoid all unholy language? Do you diligently read your Bible, and other good or innocent books? Do you choose, as far as you can, the company of good children, though it may happen that they may be less entertaining than some naughty children you know? And are you always employed? Idle children are the first to fall into sin.

"In works of labour, or of skill;  
I would be busy too;  
For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.

In books, or work, or healthful play,  
Let my first years be pass'd,  
That I may give for every day  
Some good account at last."

And to all your own endeavours to keep out of sin, do you add earnest prayers for grace, that you may keep your body in temperance, soberness, and chastity, and that your soul may be made a temple for God himself to dwell in?

My children, God has not called us to uncleanness

but to holiness. He has called us to be like him here in true holiness, that we may dwell with him hereafter, and see him face to face.

Holy children are like lambs feeding on beds of thyme and delicate verdure, fanned by the breezes of Heaven, and their thirst slaked by the purest water that runs down the mountain side, and their shepherd is the Lord of Life himself.

Impure children are like filthy swine wallowing in mire, as soon as they are washed returning to their wallowing again.

Every one admires a clean and innocent lamb. Every one dislikes the filthy and disgusting swine. Even the children of the family love to caress the lamb, and deck his fleece with flowers; but the greedy, the dirty, the grunting swine, they turn from with disgust.

Be a lamb in innocence and purity here, and the children of your Father's family above will love you, and, if permitted, will prepare for you a crown of immortal amaranth.

Yes, when you leave the pasture-ground on earth, Immanuel's land below; you shall be numbered with your Father's children, with the saints in glory everlasting; and dwell where dear children love to dwell, in their Father's presence for ever. But the unholy, the impure, whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie, shall be cast out of the holy city; for without are dogs, and all impure creatures. And how will impure children curse the vain delights, the carnal pleasures, which they followed so greedily on earth, when they see the holy children, whom once, perhaps, they despised and laughed at, admitted into Heaven, while the golden gates thereof are closed upon themselves for ever.

O, my beloved children! repent of all your impure

thoughts, words, and deeds; fly to your Saviour to be washed in his blood from all your past guilt, and pray for the Holy Spirit to cleanse your inmost soul; and, in the strength of that Spirit, put away far from you every thing that is impure, take up your cross and deny yourselves.

Impure pleasures are like poisonous weeds; pluck them up and cast them from you, and God will repay you with enduring pleasures, which, like celestial flowers, shall bud and bloom, and never die. Remember, that *he who soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* (Gal. vi. 8.)



## ADDRESS VII.

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"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."—*Matt. v. 9.*

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THE character of a peacemaker is a very sweet character. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the first and best of peacemakers. He came on earth to make peace between God and man, and to make peace between man and man. He suffered death upon the cross for our redemption, and made there a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And when this glorious work was finished, he did as it were present us to his Father, saying, "Father, behold these sheep, for whom I have laid down my life." The Father, for Christ's sake, loves us; and, if we reject not the salvation which is purchased for us, he will lift up the light of his countenance upon us, not only in this world, but for ever. Thus did Christ bring peace and good-will from God



to man, as the angels sung on the morning of Christmas-day.

Our Saviour also came to be a peacemaker between man and man. He was himself a pattern of love in all his behaviour. In every part of the New Testament he is continually exhorting us to love, to pity, and to forgiveness.

Our Saviour also makes peace in the hearts of his people. His peace he gives to them: and he puts within them the spirit of love, which teaches them to love God, and to love each other. And lastly, as the crowning work, he would have us not only love God and love each other, and enjoy heavenly peace in our own bosoms, but he would have us teach others to love God and each other, and point out to them the way of peace.

Our Saviour does not put this beatitude first: for how can persons be peacemakers who do not know what peace is themselves? We must first be humbled for our sins, and mourn for them, and seek for pardon through the blood of Christ, before we can be at peace with God. We must be meek and merciful, or we cannot know what peace is with our fellow-creatures. We must be pure in heart, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, or we cannot taste that inward peace of mind with which God fills his believing children.

My dear children, I have been at some pains to explain to you six beatitudes that go before this. Just run them over in your mind. Are you, or are you not, desirous to form yourselves after the directions they contain? Are you desirous to sit at your Saviour's feet? or, are you determined to follow the world, and to lose your own soul? In order that you may get as much of the world as you can—for all of it you will never have, Satan will never offer to you the kingdoms of this world

and their glory—you must fall down and worship him for a very little bit of the world, and that perhaps for a very short time.

But I would hope better things of you : I would hope that you have cast in your lot with the children of God, and that you are desiring, at least, to be poor in spirit—to mourn for sin—to be made to hunger and thirst after righteousness—to be merciful—to be pure in heart. If so, I will lead you a step further in the heavenly road. I will show you, that you must not only labour for peace yourselves, but strive to be peacemakers. I will take you up the summit of the hill of charity, and will show you the various paths in which peacemakers in all ages have loved to tread. I will show you the peacemaker preaching peace to the distant isles of the Gentiles. I will show you the peacemaker leading the orphan child to the knowledge of the Prince of Peace, and pointing upwards to the land of eternal love, whose name the babe had never learned before. I will show you the peacemaker reconciling parents and children, brothers and sisters ; and you shall see him sitting by the bed of the miserable, and comforting his heart with the words of the Gospel of Peace. This I will endeavor to do first : and then I will show you how peacemakers shall be called the children of God.

First, I will show you what peacemakers are : or rather, I will show you some of the ways in which you who are children can be peacemakers.

A child who is a peacemaker will strive, in the way and measure suited to his circumstances, to lead others to the knowledge of the things which make for their everlasting peace. There is some way in which every person may do good to the souls of his neighbours : the clergyman does it by his authority as a priest, by

preaching and exhortations; the man in power, by his influence; the friend, by his advice; the parent, by his instructions; servants and children, by their example, their kind and gentle persuasions, and in some cases by their authority, if they are put in situations of trust. An elder brother or sister has it in his power to be very useful to the little ones of his family. He may often make peace between them when they quarrel, and lead them to desire peace with God as the first of blessings.

I have often seen the elder children of a family instruct the little ones in heavenly things; fill their young hearts with desires after a crown of glory, and a robe of righteousness; show them the evil of their own stubborn ways, and teach them to pray in secret for the grace of God.

A child may often bring peace to the mind of a sick servant, a brother or sister, or even a parent, by reading the word of God to them, when they are not able to read to themselves.

A prudent and pious child may also be the means, as we have seen before, of leading the little child of the poor into the ways of heavenly peace.

Even a very little child who loves to be a peacemaker, may find much employment—not by speaking peace when there is no peace—not by flattery—not by deceiving—not by hiding the truth—not by telling his brothers and sisters they are good when they are naughty—but by persuading and entreating them to do right; to obey, for instance, a command of their parent, which they feel too perverse to comply with; by begging them to restrain angry expressions when they are provoked.

In short, a little child who follows peace himself and desires to be a peacemaker, will, without going out of

his way, or doing what may seem meddling or unseemly, find many ways every day of making peace. And here let him not trust to himself, but lean on his God for wisdom, and he will direct him how to act. If he is proud and full of self, he cannot do any good in this way, but will rather disgust; for a conceited child is offensive to every body. But if, instead of trusting to himself, he leans upon God for wisdom and strength, his blessing will be with him and direct all his actions; for out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God loves to perfect praise.

My children, begin by times to walk in the ways of peace, in the little narrow path of duty which God has appointed you. When you become older, God himself will show you many ways you know not yet, of adorning your profession, and striving for the peace of others, by the labor of love, the patience of hope, and the obedience of faith. And if he cuts you off while yet a child, remember what shall be the portion of the peacemakers—*they shall be called the children of God.*

Thus am I brought to the second thing which I promised to show you:—what is meant by being called the children of God.

In some sense all persons are the children of God, and we are all permitted to say, “Our Father, which art in Heaven:” but I think that what is here meant is, that we shall be called the children of God, because we shall be like God. Our Saviour, as I told you at large, is the great Peacemaker; and if we are peacemakers, we shall be like him in some small measure and degree: and in his great mercy and love, he sometimes calls himself the Elder Brother of his people. What a glorious privilege is this. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but*

*we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John iii. 2.)*

While they live here on earth, peacemakers shall be the children of God ; and as tender parents love their little children, and are ever planning for their happiness, so does the Almighty God extend his arm of love and protection over his children. He provides them with every thing that is really good for them, corrects them when they do wrong, instructs them with his Spirit, and trains them up for Heaven. And when their life is past, the day of school discipline, of the spiritual lessons, and of correction, then the peacemakers, the children of God, shall go home. Angels shall carry them into their Father's house, where mansions are prepared for them. They shall see the glory of Christ their elder brother, he who has purchased for them everlasting peace, and has sanctified and prepared them for it by his Spirit. And God himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall rejoice over his redeemed and reconciled children for ever.

Lastly. I will show you that the conduct of children is naturally very unlike that of peacemakers ; and I will beg of each of you to inquire whether your own particular conduct is like that of the peacemaker. Children in general seek for peace, first of all, by gaining as much worldly pleasure as they can ; and not by seeking God's favour and forgiveness to them, through the blood of Jesus Christ. They never think of teaching the way of peace to their little brothers and sisters, or their companions ; but too often lead them into sin and trouble, by their bad example, their folly and vanity ; and, often, by really teaching them the practice of sin.

Elder children often destroy the peace and quiet of little ones by their ill-temper, selfishness, and covetousness, and tease, and tyrannise over them, to gratify their love of power ; or even to get from them any nice



thing which may have been given them, and which they covet ; or sometimes merely to get a favourite seat, or something of no greater consequence ; or perhaps they are out of temper, and want they know not what. How often do children disturb the peace of their parents by their perverseness and wilful stupidity ! A kind parent or teacher, who is instructing a child, is often obliged to repeat the same direction many times over in vain, and, at last, to correct the child, who could with ease have done the thing desired cheerfully and pleasantly. It is not the mere teaching of children which is fatiguing, but it is the correction of their wayward tempers. Thus do children in general greatly disturb their parents' peace.

It is the same with servants. Many children, where they dare, are tyrannical with their servants. Others are very teasing and provoking to good-natured servants who will bear with them, give them needless trouble, hinder them when they are busy, are unthankful to them for their kind offices, and treat them always with bad manners. But these are only a few of the ways by which children destroy the peace of others. Some will go so far as to make real quarrels, by repeating little foolish things which one child says of another, to the very child herself or by mentioning in public what they may have heard said by their parents or persons in private.

I do not mean here to find fault with children, who, when they see any thing wicked done, tell their parents, or nurse, or any proper person of it. This it is their duty to do, though they may be blamed for it, or called tell-tales or cants : names often very sinfully used to persecute people who are doing a painful duty, in bringing to light the hidden works of darkness. But children who are most fond of chattering and repeating idle tales, talking about other people's business,

will often be the last to tell their parents when they see any thing done which is really wicked: because this sort of children have seldom any true and holy courage in the cause of God.

And now, having described a few of the instances in which worldly-minded children are unlike peacemakers, I will beg you, my beloved children, to examine your own conduct attentively and seriously, and I fear you will find that it has been too like the behaviour of these worldly-minded children. I fear that few of you have really desired to be peacemakers. But O! I entreat you, let old things pass away. Whatever your past conduct may have been, it is not too late to repent. The day of grace is not over. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Your Saviour calls to you, and he says, *Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* Strive, in your Saviour's strength, to be poor in spirit, and mourn for your past sin, to be meek and lowly in heart, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart: thus ascending the Hill of Faith and Holiness, you shall come to the Delectable Mountains of Peace. Here, my children, you shall find a safe and quiet dwelling-place. Thousands of children have lived and died in the Valley of Destruction, slaves to Satan and the world, and they have had their reward. But where are they now? Holy children, too, have lived and died in the service of God. Those who once mocked at them, can mock at them no more, for they are gone to their own place. But where are those holy children now? Foolish children counted their lives madness: but now are they numbered with the sons of God. Will you follow them to glory? Is eternal rest in the Kingdom of God better than endless burnings? Is it better to ride forth with

the armies of Heaven, to see the stars in their brightness, or to be confined as a living man in an adamantine coffin, in the prisons of darkness for ever? Is the company of your Creator, your Saviour, your Sanctifier, better than the company of Satan and his angels? Is it sweeter to rest at your Saviour's feet, to be refreshed by his smiles, to have all tears wiped away from your eyes? or is it sweeter to be tormented for ever?

Choose, my children, your portion. If it is Hell you choose, take your fill of the world: make haste, your day is short, it will soon be closed in endless night. But if Heaven is your portion, you must up and be doing—you must ascend, I repeat to you, the difficult Hills of Faith and Holiness, and stop not till you reach the Delectable Mountains of Peace—Peace with God—Peace with your own conscience—Peace with your fellow-creatures—Then shall you have a view of the spacious Promised Land, the land of oil, olives and honey. It is a pleasant land—it shall be yours, the length and breadth of all the land as far as Faith can see.



### ADDRESS VIII.

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"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."—*Matt. v. 10.*

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I HAVE been endeavouring, my dear children, in what I have lately said to you, to give you some few outlines of the character of a holy child. They are very imperfect indeed; for who can properly describe those heavenly touches with which the Spirit of God new moulds the soul of man? But such as the outlines are, they will serve to show you to yourselves, and make you see how far you have gone astray; and I hope they may fill you with some earnest desires to

find the narrow path which leads to glory, the King's Highway of Holiness.

May the Spirit strengthen these desires, till you are filled with earnest longings after your eternal inheritance! For when you are indeed born again, you shall be the sons and daughters of a King; and, after you have spent a little time in this land of your banishment, this prison-house, you shall be set at liberty, you shall dwell in the land that is very far off, and see the King in his beauty: for ye are the redeemed of the Lord; and ye shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon your head, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

But I must declare to you the whole counsel of God: if you cast in your lot with the people of God, you must count your cost; you must, through tribulation, enter into glory; if you are faithful in doing your duty, you will meet with persecution.

I shall, therefore, in the first place, proceed to explain to you, how it is, that if you follow righteousness you shall be persecuted. Next, I shall try to show you, how those who are persecuted shall be blessed.

We may in this place explain righteousness to mean, the doing our duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us. Take it in this sense, and you will soon see very plainly how righteousness leads to persecution. For what is doing our duty? it is being about our heavenly Father's business, and following after the will of God in our particular situations, as we would follow after our meat and drink. Now, we all know, that doing the will of God is a very different thing from doing our own will or the will of men. Sometimes it may happen that what it is right for us to do may be pleasant to ourselves and pleasant to other people. Suppose, for instance, your parents were to give you some money to divide among several poor peo-

ple, or some presents to distribute to your brothers and sisters, the thing would be pleasant to yourself as well as to other people; but it often happens, that what is right for us to do is unpleasant to other people, and then we must follow the will of God, instead of our own will, or the will of others. Giving up our own will is self-denial; it is often called also, taking up our cross. But when we do what is against the will of men, we make men our enemies for that time. We must expect some treatment from them that is not pleasant to us, and which may be called persecution.

I will give you a few examples of this.

Suppose your parents were to desire you to gather the fruit of a certain tree in their garden, requiring you not to eat any of it yourself, nor to suffer any one else to eat of it; and ordering you, in case you could not prevent any person from eating the fruit, to acquaint them with it; and suppose, while you were busy in gathering this fruit, a child in the family were to come into the garden and begin to eat the fruit; and although you had civilly warned that child against the consequences of eating the fruit, he were still to persist in gathering and eating, and you were therefore obliged to tell your parents of his behaviour; it is very likely that such a child would become very angry with you, call you ill-natured and a tell-tale, refuse to play with you, and lead other children to dislike you, and perhaps use you ill in some way himself; this would be persecution, and it would occasion you many painful feelings.

Children do not love persecution, and very often, to avoid it, act unfaithfully and deceive. In the case we have just mentioned, a child unfaithful to his duty would have suffered his companion to eat a little fruit rather than have complained of him and made him his enemy. Many children neglect their duty in various



ways, and will even join, especially at school, in schemes and plans they neither enjoy nor approve of, in order to escape being laughed at, or called a tell-tale, or persecution of some other sort. But the child who desires to be faithful, will lift up his heart in secret prayer, when he is tempted to leave some duty undone, or to do something wrong in order to avoid persecution. And when the persecution does come, he tells his heavenly Father of all his sorrows, and lays his head as it were on his Saviour's bosom, and he is refreshed with hidden comforts; he is enabled to bear his trial with patience; and he remembers where it is said, that if we are faithful unto death, he will give us a crown of life; and often it happens that the heart of his enemies is turned to love him. And this leads me to explain to you more particularly how the persecuted are blessed.

Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are blessed, because the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Even in this world many sweet consolations shall be afforded to the faithful and persecuted child of God, as I had just begun to tell you.

The children of God walk by faith; the children of this world walk by sight; and worldly children look for happiness in having a great many worldly pleasures, and escaping, at any rate, from blame, and trouble, and punishment. The child of this world is, therefore, unfaithful in doing his duty, when he can get any thing he likes, or escape any thing he fears, by his wicked neglect.

But the ill-gotten favour of his fellow-creatures will give him no real peace, there is no peace to the wicked; and even when he seems to have gained most by his worldly compliance, his conscience will often say to him, if he has any conscience left, "Who art thou, that regardest man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker?"

How much sweeter is the lot of the holy and faithful child, who, when he has been faithful to God, and offended his fellow-creatures, comes to his Saviour and tells him of his sorrow. All his journey through, the faithful child shall be comforted, and supported, and strengthened, by his gracious Saviour. Often his enemies will be made to own his innocence, and he will be honoured before men, as was the case with Joseph. There is a confidence and respect which even a faithful child will meet with from his fellow-creatures, when he is known and tried. I have sometimes seen more trust reposed in a *little* faithful child by its parents and friends, than has been placed in a faithless person who is three times its age. But whether that be so or not, the faithful child will, at the last day, be owned and acknowledged before men and angels. In his lifetime he did not depart from his Saviour, he walked in the strength of him who had loved him and laid down his life for him; and now he shall not be separated from him, he shall be with him and see his glory; he was faithful over a little, and now he shall be made lord over many things. It shall be said unto him, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* (Matt. xxv. 21.)

I come now, in the last place, to ask you, my dear children, whether you have any reason to think that you are faithful in doing your Master's will? whether you are walking in the way of righteousness, ready to endure persecution, if need be? or whether you are studying only to please men, and are in the habit of acting contrary to the will of God, when you think that doing it will expose you to the anger of your fellow-creatures?

It is your nature to love your ease, and to avoid whatever is difficult and troublesome to you; and even those persons who are most in the habit of being cross

when they are offended, will often be the most unwilling to find fault when a desire to walk faithfully with God requires it, because this is contrary to their nature, and it is difficult to them.

Thus, my children, you may be ready enough to find fault with others, when they do not please you, and to insist upon having your own way; but can you stand firm when your duty requires? If another child offers to take any thing from you, that is committed to your care, can you resolutely refuse him? When you are sent of an errand and ordered to return immediately, and another child persuades you to stay behind and play, can you continue firm in denying him, when he laughs at you and threatens you? If your parents or master set you a lesson to learn by yourself, and, while they are out of the room, other children persuade you to play, can you resolutely say, no? When from home, can you refuse wine, or fruit, or cake, or any other indulgence, when you know that it is your parents' desire that you should not have these things? Can you refuse to read a book or join in discourse disapproved of by your parents, when other children are persuading you to it and ridiculing you for refusing? Can you stand alone, and say that a thing is right to be done, and persist in doing it, when the multitude around you are following evil? Now ask yourselves truly, and I fear you will find that you are ready to be good with the good, but that with the naughty you are naughty; and that not merely because you like to be naughty: for children who have been kept from outward sin on many occasions, had rather not commit sin, but they are naughty often with the naughty, because they do not like to be laughed at, because they do not like to stand ill with the world, to be singular, and in some cases because they are afraid of being beaten or otherwise used ill by wicked children. And why is this? Because

you love the praise of men more than the praise of God ; because you love self and your own ease more than the will of God. But deceive not yourselves : if you seek your reward from man and not from God, take your reward and enjoy it, but it is all you shall have.

In a few years the men, the women, the children whom you have sought to please by being unfaithful to your God, shall die ; they shall return, dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes. You may perhaps walk in the church-yard, and you may be able to say, " Under these little hillocks lie many children whom I sought to please while they lived, by disobeying my God ; I gained my reward by pleasing them, and now is my reward perished with them." While the faithful child, who obeyed God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, who did his Father's will, not regarding the laughter and threats, or even the stripes of sinful children, may joyfully look up and say, " If in this life only we had hope in Christ, we should of all men be most miserable : but now is Christ risen from the dead, and therefore our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

*Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* Consider now, my beloved children, will you choose your portion with the faithful or the unfaithful ? Now is your heavenly Father ready to forgive your past wanderings, to wash away your sins in the precious blood of Christ ; now is he ready to give you his Holy Spirit to strengthen you for the fight, and even for the victory. Remember you cannot fight in your own strength ; for what is it that overcometh the world ? is it not our faith ? Take then the shield of faith, and the fiery darts of the enemy shall not have power to do you any real harm, and in a little while your warfare shall be accomplished.

Perhaps you may be called home while yet an infant

warrior, and may be early numbered with the saints in glory everlasting. But if your warfare should last even to old age, you will still be strengthened for the battle; and as you go forward on your way, your path shall be as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, till at last you shall enter into your Master's joy, and sit down at his right hand for evermore; while the unfaithful and impenitent child shall have his candle put out in everlasting darkness.



### ADDRESS IX.

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"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—*Matt. v. 11, 12.*

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I TRIED lately to show you, that those children who are faithful in doing their duty, must expect to meet with persecution: and this is a new and hard lesson for children to learn who know little of their own hearts, and still less of the world, and who have been used to be smiled upon by pious and tender parents in proportion to their real good behaviour. But I have yet a harder lesson than this to teach you. The wicked world persecutes not only the children who are faithful in doing their duty to their fellow-creatures; but, what is still worse, it will often persecute them more for loving God, and being faithful to their Saviour—for honouring that sacred name in which they ought to glory above all things. You must read your Bible diligently, my children, and then you will understand how these things are. You will find that, ever since the fall of man, there has been a warfare between the children of God and the children of Satan. The Old Testament is a history of this, before the coming of Christ; and when our blessed Lord appeared on earth,



you know how his enemies joined together against him, and how for a time they seemed to prosper: for they crucified the Lord of Life. He did triumph, gloriously triumph over them; but still the same warfare has been continued ever since, between his followers and the followers of Satan; and we are told that it will be so, in one form or another, till Christ shall come again to reign gloriously, and to destroy with the breath of his mouth, all who have dared to oppose him.

Then shall his kingdom be established on earth; then shall all hearts be turned to him; those who were once fierce like the lion shall lie down with the lamb-like followers of Christ: then shall *the desert rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.* (Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2.)

Our Saviour knew that his people would meet with this persecution, and he therefore encourages them to rejoice in it, by giving them very great and glorious promises.

I will just repeat again to you the verses I have begun to explain.

*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

The persecution which the followers of Christ meet with at different seasons and under different circumstances, is not at all of the same kind. And I shall now endeavour to explain to you, in the first place, what sort of persecution Christian children in this land

are most likely to meet with ; and in the next place, I shall describe to you the different conduct of faithful and unfaithful children under this persecution.

Once holy children were burned, were tormented, and underwent various cruel hardships, because they were faithful to their Lord and Saviour : but, thanks be to God, these days have passed away. The persecution of the present day is chiefly that of cruel mockings ; and though, at first sight, it seems much easier to bear to be laughed at than to suffer pain, yet perhaps Satan knew that the fear of being laughed at would turn more people from God, than the fear of pain, and therefore he kept it for his last trial.

Children have not in general to fear being beaten or outwardly hurt for loving Christ, though that sometimes happens ; but sneers and laughter are very common, and they will find them very hard to bear.

Suppose a little child, brought up in pious habits, and really desiring to live a life of communion with God, has accidentally a visiter, who from circumstances is compelled to be its bedfellow, and this child has not been used to any habits of serious religion, but perhaps has heard them ridiculed ; when he sees his little pious companion kneel down once, or twice, or perhaps three times, in the course of the day by his bed-side, and spend more time there than is the ordinary custom, and then observes him sit down quietly to read a few verses in his Bible ; he will perhaps laugh outright at him, call him a Methodist or some name of reproach ; or, if he is too polite to go so far, he will perhaps look at him with contempt, and speak of him as a kind of fool. And he will do this still more, if in the course of the time they spend together the one should object to any diversion, or any way of talking, as sinful, of which the other is particularly fond. How often does the contemptuous sneer of the wicked child

prevail ! The once holy and happy child listens to the voice of Satan, who fills him with false shame ; he shortens his times of prayer—sometimes lays prayer aside entirely—does not open his Bible at all, and moulds his thoughts and feelings by the views of his worldly companion : he becomes ashamed of his Saviour, and a slave to the fear of man ; and that peace which passeth all understanding, departs from his mind, not to come back till by faith and repentance he returns into the narrow way.

Some trial of the sort which I have just described, happens to all children upon mixing with worldly companions at home, or at school, or even in an occasional visit.

It is very plain that the temptation of ridicule is very strong, or else we should not see so much lukewarmness, so much deadness in religion, as is common among the children of this day through fear of ridicule. How many children do we see, worldly with the worldly, religious with the religious, like waves of the sea tossed to and fro. But think not that such children can prosper in what they do : they must repent ; they must turn to God, and seek to be washed clean in the blood of Christ, and to be renewed by his Spirit, or they must expect the portion of the unfaithful servant, continual restlessness, uneasiness, and alarm in this world, and in the next world to be for ever cast out of His presence of whom they have been ashamed.

It is not possible for me to mention every kind of ridicule which children are likely to meet with, but I have given you a faint outline of its nature ; and if you will, with that outline in your mind, look into your own habits of life and the habits of the company whom you are most likely to meet with, you will easily find out the occasions in which each of you are most exposed to ridicule on account of religion, and these are the occasions on which you must be especially armed.

I have shown you a little of the misery of the child who is unfaithful to his Saviour; the fears of religion are the only part of it which he tastes, the sweet comforts of it and its privileges are for the faithful child. Let us look now a little at another picture, let us look at the faithful child—

“Among the faithless, faithful only he.”

Blessed is the child who endures persecution, let him rejoice and be exceeding glad even in this world, for great is his reward in Heaven. The faithful child is very careful to avoid offending his companions needlessly; that is, he is good-humoured, he is ready to give up his own advantage, that he may, if possible, win them over to his Saviour's cause. He is very careful, that his selfishness and ill-temper should procure him no enemies; and giving up to his companions in all innocent ways, he determines to stand firm as a rock in his Master's strength, in the cause of religion. His heart and his treasure are in Heaven, and he counts all earthly things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He stores his mind with heavenly promises, and exercises himself in holy meditations. He loves to see, as already his own, the golden battlements of Zion. He has weighed earthly and heavenly things in the balance, and he has found that earthly things are lighter than vanity. He has sat down, and counted the cost; and though he loves not persecution, for who can love to be laughed at? yet it does not make him waver and hesitate; he does not turn out of the path of duty to avoid being laughed at, he goes on steadily, taking up his cross, as his Lord and Master did before. He does not lay aside his prayer or his Bible, or shorten his time of devotion. He does not follow any sinful practice with his companions, or hide his opinion of sin, if called upon to speak out, because he is afraid of ridicule: but remembering that he is a pilgrim and

stranger upon earth, he bears the ill-treatment he meets with patiently ; it neither leads him to give up his duty, nor provokes him to be fierce and passionate. He rests himself on his Saviour, and in his patience possesses his soul ; and though outwardly afflicted, though worldly children count his life madness, though he is sometimes in heaviness, and perhaps in tears, yet still he rejoices in tribulation. Often when in prayer, and as it were alone with Christ, his comforts will distil like dew upon him, refreshing him, and causing his graces as it were to bud anew, and send forth a sweet perfume. Sometimes he will have such sweet hopes of glory as will make him feel that his present trials are nothing ; he will rejoice and be exceedingly glad with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It will often happen too, that his steady, consistent, and gentle conduct will in time win over his very enemies ; those who persecuted him most will in their hearts respect him far more than they do the wavering and unstable child, and his consistent conduct may even be made the means of overcoming the enmity that is in the hearts of worldly children against true religion ; and then will his enemies, seeing his good works, glorify his Father who is in Heaven ; and those children who persecuted him like wolves and lions, shall now lie down with him in their Master's fold like lambs. This is no uncommon case, and when it does happen, it most sweetly refreshes and encourages the holy child in his way to Zion. But however that may be, whether he sees his enemies turned to him or not, he goes on still in the way, praying for them, and leaning on his Saviour, patient in hope, rejoicing in tribulation, till the days of his pilgrimage are over, and he enters into his Master's joy : for great shall be his reward in Heaven, through the merits of Him who has strengthened him all the journey through. O ! happy child ! O ! blessed end !



O that I could, in taking leave of you, my beloved children, exhort you to tread in his steps! O that I had the tongue of an angel, to persuade you to choose the path of life! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Let me remind you to weigh well that word: consider what eternity is, and upon what it depends—even upon the manner in which you spend the few remaining years, perhaps days, of life. O, my beloved children! who have once smiled as innocent babes in the arms of tender parents, can it be that you shall inherit eternal misery, bitter groans, and endless crying? Far be it from us to entertain so dreadful a thought, whatever you may have once been, however you may have hitherto despised the privileges of Christian baptism, though you may have erred and strayed from your Saviour's fold like lost sheep, yet the day of grace is not past: your Saviour holds out his arms to receive you; he invites you to come to him that you may be saved. Come to him as poor and sinful children, poor in spirit and mourning for sin, and learn of him to be meek, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure, to be peacemakers. Be ready to take up your cross, to endure persecution for righteousness' sake and your Master's sake. Stretch out your feeble arms after Christ, and he will strengthen you to lay hold firmly of him by faith; and in his strength you shall make daily advances in all these heavenly Christian graces. But do not try to do any thing in your own strength: you can never do any thing better in your own strength, than make resolutions and break them. This is one reason why children do so little, because they put so much confidence in themselves and so little in their Saviour. *Without me*, our Saviour says, *ye can do nothing*. (John xv. 5.) Did you ever love to follow the steps of a tender mother, to wait upon her for a thousand little gifts of love and kindness, for sweet

smiles as well as more solid gifts? This pleasant dependent life of infancy cannot yet be forgotten by you, you were babes not many years ago.

As you once thus followed a beloved parent, so now by faith follow Christ all the day long, to obtain pardon, holiness, and peace, wisdom and direction in your difficulties, and success in your undertakings: then shall you indeed lead a happy life, for you shall be supported and comforted under all troubles, and the innocent pleasures of life shall be doubly pleasant to you. For Jesus Christ himself has said that you shall be blessed, because you are poor in spirit, because you mourn for sin: because you are meek, you shall be blessed; because you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you shall be blessed; because you are pure in heart, because you are a peacemaker, you shall be blessed; because you are persecuted for Christ's sake, you shall be blessed. Yes, for all these things you shall be blessed—Blessed in time—Blessed in eternity. Not for your own sake shall you be blessed, but because you are one with Christ, members of his body, and made the children of the living God, and fellow heirs with your Elder Brother of the kingdom of Heaven. And when at the last day that awful sentence shall be pronounced upon all impenitent and unfaithful children, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*, (Matt. xxv. 41,) you shall then hear your God and Father, your Saviour and Redeemer, calling to you and saying, “Come, ye blessed children, enter into the glory that was prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”



